

## **Exhibit 8**

Angelique Boccaro  
February 16th, 2018

To Whom This May Concern,

I am a longtime friend of Nicole Bronson. Nicole and I have been best friends since as far back as I could remember. Starting as far back as elementary school, we've remained friends through middle, high school and adulthood. Outside of Nicole's sister's, I am probably the person that knows Nicole best.

Nicole has shared that she has made some pretty poor decisions that have the potential to impact her, her daughter, and family's lives significantly. She has expressed great remorse for her actions and I've seen a drastic shift in Nicole's actions as well as priorities. Before I share the shift, I've seen. Allow me to share a bit of our history.

Growing up, Nicole was a natural leader. She and I clicked because of our care for others, our drive, ambition, and outgoing attitudes. We loved to laugh, and were often crowned "loudest" in our respective groups. We always had something we felt that people needed to hear. I suppose that comes from our similar upbringing. Nicole, like myself, grew up in a single parent household. She also, like myself, was exposed to the emotional trauma that comes with having two parents at odds. Often we'd listen to our peers share stories of their "healthy", ideal, families and we would bond over the fact that ours was everything but that. I had two brothers, so Nicole and her 4 sisters were like the sisters I always wished I had. Nearly every weekend, Nicole would invite me to come with her and her sisters to partake in various events. We would have so much fun! Even up to this day, when we all get together, we laugh until we cry, fight like we're 12, and in the end share love. While I felt special to be included, I also noticed the separation between Nicole and the rest of her family. Nicole has always been seen as the "tough" one. The one that was fearless. The one that had drive and ambition, and the one that everyone would call on for help- for anything- at any time. Nicole would give you her last. Often times I would watch Nicole "suffer in silence" to make sure those she cared about were taken care of. This went beyond her immediate family.

Being that we were being raised by single parents, we spent a lot of time at the boys and girls club in the inner city. We also played on the same basketball team – a place that became my sanctuary. Growing up from age 6-18 at the boys and girls club was very influential in our growth. We loved our boys club family. We were a bunch of kids with similar backgrounds, all working together to find -what we didn't know at the time – would be our only refuge. This brought a lot of comfort, but also brought a lot of challenges. Often times we'd deal with our friends fighting, girls wanting to fight Nicole simply because she was pretty, fights eventually turned into murders. We've lost so many of our friends to gun violence, we've also lost friends due to being in jail or becoming mother's young. I would say that in our time, it was survival of the fittest. You had no choice but to make split second decisions – some of which were wrong in hindsight- to survive. While it may seem odd, we

loved this refuge. This was our only constant. We knew what to expect and we knew that we would "make it". From a really young age Nicole inspired me by sharing her perspective on life, and aspirations to be an architect. Nicole has always been very creative. She would draw these elaborate designs and share that one day she'd be successful. She inspired me to dream past my own limitations. She was my "right hand man". I mentioned we played basketball. On the court, we were unstoppable! Our hustle, our drive, our desire to win came from a place deep within our core. I believe that all high performers are driven by necessity. In other words, success is necessary and failure is not an option. I believe that our environments created this "necessity". The need to live a better life. The best life. Anything less was not an option.

On our quest to live a better life, we ran into many challenges. Having such assertiveness and drive as a young woman, at such an at an early age, doesn't always fare well in school or at home. Nicole's mother (when present) was extremely hard on her. Often, I think it was because she thought Nicole could handle it while her four sisters needed more "love" and kindness. Her mom's tough love often turned to abuse and neglect. I remember fist fights and really difficult situations Nicole would be in with nowhere to go due to her and her mother being at odds. At a very early age Nicole was kicked out of her mother's home. My mom welcomed her to come and live with us. My mom absolutely loves Nicole. I mean up to this day, she sees Nicole as a diamond in the rough. A person that has lived life the best way she knows how, and that cares for others beyond words. My mom was there to listen to Nicole and to give her boundaries, attention, and stability. Those things that every child thrives off. Nicole responded well but it was clear that she was in pain. She felt "less than" and often tried to prove that she was "good enough" through her large aspirations, appearance, and drive. All the things that would work in her favor if nurtured, easily worked against her in many ways due to the lack of nurture and care that comes from a mother or father.

Nicole sought to find love anywhere. She and I both made some pretty questionable decisions regarding men. Nicole specifically got involved with older men. She was in abusive, and unhealthy relationships. One that we thought were normal at the time. One of which she became pregnant by as a teenager. I remember seeing her with this growing being developing and thinking "what are we going to do? We're kids"? And then saying, "Nicole will figure it out. She always does." Shortly after Nicole gave birth to a beautiful baby girl Nichelle Ashley, however, she passed away within a few hours after birth, due to her severe preterm conditions. Nicole was distraught; hopeless and aimless with purpose. All that she had planned; fought for; and finally thought would bring her endless joy (motherhood), soon became her deepest pain. Personally, I am not sure how Nicole, or anyone for that matter could ever recover from such a tragedy. Throughout this time, I would share what was going on in Nicole's life with my mom and she would be so concerned. She would want Nicole to be close to us. At the time, we had started to live our own lives so Nicole couldn't just go spend a few nights at my mom's house. Even worse, during this time it seemed that Nicole's mother and father were absent.

Nicole also became like the lone wolf from her sisters. She would basically learn to survive on her own, but had a unique way of inspiring her sisters within infrequent family gatherings. I remember Nicole making family from her closest friends, appreciating that family doesn't always have the same bloodline. Understanding, solitude could be beneficial for her healing and growth, she was content that her parents and sisters were all at different places within their lives; everyone trying to survive. Nicole didn't have close relationships with her grandparents so she took to my grandmother, Mattie Jackson, a extraordinary woman of faith and well establish San Francisco Community Advocate and Leader; when Nicole lived with us she and grand-mom Mattie bonded over cooking and talking about how she wanted to follow in her footsteps in our community someday. I wished Nicole could have stayed with us, so we could have protected her from the world, but back then Nicole was in search of something much greater; her own; someone to love her and that she could love unconditionally.

Nicole's father was in and out of her life, as were most of the fathers of our closest friends, including mine. I remember after Nichelle was born, and Albert joined the fire academy and appeared to be doing well financially he was around more; or when he was not distracted by a new girlfriend. Although, he did love when we played sports and was around more, Nicole always loved when her dad came to support her at games and tournaments. However, he hated being around Nicole's mom, tension was high and it was very awkward when they were in the same room. To do things as a family was close to impossible. I mean it was very clear that both Nicole's mom and Dad wanted nothing to do with each other, but I loved each of them whenever they were around. Albert, was the fun and cool dad when he popped up, but Tiani was definitely the disciplinary.

As we grew we held jobs to provide for ourselves. Nicole became pregnant with her second child, Mia. Mia was the most beautiful soul we'd ever known. Mia was energetic, smart, vivacious, loving, kind, wise beyond her year and totally in love with her mom! And Nicole is in love with Mia! I saw Nicole transform into her best self. She does anything and everything for Mia, her compassion and understanding towards Mia is unconditional something Nicole never experienced, but taught herself to do. We would joke that Nicole would have Mia's schedule so packed that she was busier than most adults. Mia did everything! Anything Mia was interested in, Nicole worked hard to make sure Mia could participate. And Nicole never missed a chance to support Mia. As I look at Mia now, she is a clone of Nicole, she is everything Nicole hoped she could have been as young girl. Mia loves to make people laugh, she kind hearted, and extremely confident; she believes that she can do anything. She's much better than we were in school academically. She gets really good grades and surrounds herself with such positive influences; faith based youth groups; and takes every opportunity to absorb all her mother's wisdom. I know that this is a result of Nicole's deliberate efforts to raise Mia in a nurturing and healthy environment. One very different from hers.

Most recently, Nicole and Mia have both inspired me to become closer to God. I remember receiving a phone call from Nicole a couple years ago, after she relocated to LA. We

chatted for hours (as usual) and she mentioned that she was reading a book that had really helped her to start changing her life. It was "The Battlefield of the Mind" by Joyce Meyers. She went on to mentioned she had rededicated herself to Christ; I was shocked! I was always the one involved in church so to hear Nicole recommend this Christian book was surprising. But then when I thought about it, I thought maybe this is exactly what Nicole has been looking for her entire life- the LOVE of God. I am really humbled to share that ever since that phone call I have witnessed Nicole morph into a new person. A person that is humble, reliant on faith versus her own strength, a person that puts herself in a vulnerable position to gain strength from several sources. And most importantly, a person that is honest and accountable.

I can honestly say that Nicole has become much more responsible for her actions. She and I had a conversation where she told me about her past choices that has led up to today's challenges, she struggled telling me because it was embarrassing and shameful, but she pushed through and then with hope in her eyes she said to me, "God has allowed me to fail so He can raise me up, I needed to see what I was chasing and where it could lead me in order to appreciation His grace and fix my eyes on Him, and not the desires or material things of this world. She concludes by stating, although the outcome of the case is worrisome, I know God uses all things for my good; in order to move forward I must face the actions of my past so I can have a pure and holy future in Christ. I have peace with whatever my consequences will be because at the end I will be a humble being". Needless, to say she is being driven by different priorities; her salvation and purifying her soul and leading her family to Christ so they too can experience the true freedoms of living a life to glorified God. She no longer feels the need to prove her value or worth, because she knows her true identity as a child of God. I am so proud of the honesty, humility, and vulnerability that Nicole has recently shown. These types of lasting changes only come through hard life lessons and God's grace.

I was recently with Nicole and her sisters at a birthday party. I was speaking with Mia about school. Mia was explaining to me how she was recently being bullied for no reason at her new school. Since Mia was little Mia attending private schools or schools in the East Bay suburbs; since Nicole and Mia relocated to Sacramento, Mia had been attending an inner city school in Oak Park, Sacramento. It reminded me of when Nicole was Mia's age. Mia shared that she didn't want to physically fight and that the girls had no reason not to like her, but told Mia they were going to jump her one day. I asked Mia what she was going to do and she immediately responded "well my mother handled it!". She said it with such confidence and comfort. Nicole described that she had gone to the school and spoke with the Dean and other officials to ensure that Mia was safe.

Nicole, said something to me recently which struck me, and she said it with confident and peace, "The source of our pain will eventually be the source of our joy; everything (good and bad) in life happens through the grace of God." Nicole is inspiring and I am proud she is my closet friend and sister, and I thank God daily for bring her into my life 30 years ago.

Although, I know that Nicole has made some bad decisions and severe mistakes, she has a unique ability not to let defeat overtake her and define her, she's resilient and that is contagious and encouraging to others close to her. Her new views on eternal life have created an entirely new person, mother, and friend in Nicole. She's not just filled with knowledge but she exudes wisdom; she makes me brave to stand in my true truths. I ask that the court consider a few things; Nicole's upbringing which drove her to search for value and worth in all the wrong places. Nicole's transformation - Nicole has transformed into a completely different person through this entire experience, but she needed all the experiences which led up to this point in order for her to find her identity in Christ, now she's unwavering because the love she so desperately was searching for is free and available only through Christ. She has shared her mistakes, taken full responsibility, and expressed remorse and fear, especially for her daughter's future. And lastly, Mia. As a woman, I know how crucial my mother has been in my development. In fact, as a 32-year-old, I rely on my mom on a daily basis, and I see that same comparison in Mia and Nicole's relationship. Mia is all Nicole ever had and I see the heaviness on her heart with the possibility of not being there for Mia even for a day. Nicole is all Mia has; although Nicole's family adores Mia no one will protect and love Mia like her mother to see them separate would be devastation for them both. Mia is also approaching a very critical stage in her development as a teen, high school. I pray that she has her mother by her side to guide her through the rough terrain, because Nicole didn't and it have impacted her tremendously emotionally, mentally, and spiritually .

I thank you for your time and careful consideration of my best friend Nicole and my god-daughter Mia.

Sincerely,

Angelique Boccaro